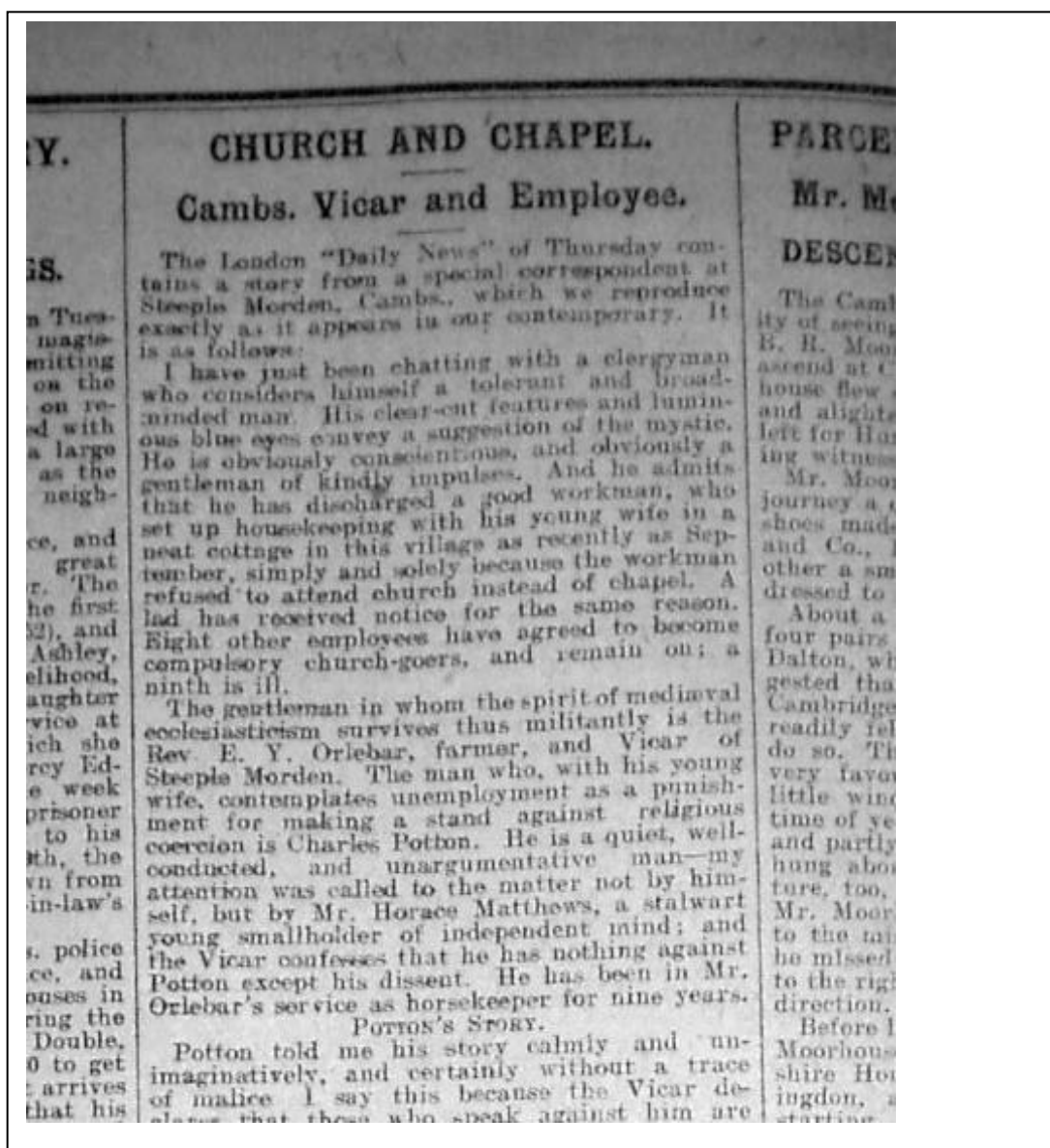


Steeple Morden Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at [bit.ly/CambsCollection](https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Mike%20Petty%22)

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Mike%20Petty%22>

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2018

Steeple Morden Scrapbook

1898 11 02

Steeple Morden recreation ground inquiry, p2

1898 12 28

On Christmas Eve the parish authorities at Steeple Morden were called upon to perform a strange act of seasonal charity. A young woman who had been seen about the neighbouring villages on the previous day gave birth to a child under a hedge by the wayside, where she had lain down to sleep, in the bitterly cold weather. The spot was far from human habitations and when the officials came on the scene they found the woman in a helpless plight and the new-born child dead by her side. They had her conveyed to the Union workhouse at Royston.

1899 04 21

An exhibition of articles produced by students attending technical education classes was opened at Cambridge Guildhall. Many samples of straw plaiting work were entered by pupils from Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden and Tadlow. It is to be hoped that after another 12 months instruction the revival of straw plaiting in these localities as an industry will be an established fact

1901 01 03

The visit of a 'ghost' to the cottages of Steeple Morden, known as 'Moco' and occupied by a gamekeeper and his wife and a shepherd, has caused a great sensation in the village. A fortnight ago the gamekeeper heard strange noises, as from a person in agony, emanate from the party wall. He then heard a thud and the firing of a gun in one corner of their room. It is stated that one if not two murders were perpetrated at this place many years ago.

1903 11 11

Steeple Morden mystery, p3

1905 11 04

Justices awarded compensation under the scheme for reducing the number of public houses. They included the Hoops pubs in Kneesworth, Melbourn and Steeple Morden, the Sir Harry Smith at Swavesey and the Ram's Head at Swaffham Bulbeck. In Oakington The Windmill, King's Head and Plough and Harrow were closed. But the closure of the 'Wait for the Bus' at Bottisham was contested; others Rams Head, Swaffham Bulbeck; Swaffham Prior: White Hart; Swavesey: Railroad, Bird in Hand; Cottenham: Windmill; Dry Drayton: Rose and Crown 05 11 04b-d # c.27.4

1906 03 07

Two Steeple Morden labourers were summoned for damaging a fence on election day. Witnesses said they had thrown stones at a window and pulled down 27 feed of palings, a charge they denied. The magistrates said: the proceedings were perfectly disgraceful; because there happens to be an election it does not justify people in doing as they like. One man was fined 30 shillings and jocularly asked the other if he could lend him a sovereign to pay. 06 03 07 # c.33

1906 06 30

Fourteen public houses have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904. They include a beer house at Heath Road Litlington, which sold one barrel a week, including stout, and a gallon of ginger wine. All their beer was made from pure malt and hops and it was a better house than the two nearest to it. There were four fully-licensed houses, four beer houses and one off-licence in the village. The Dolphin at Stapleford had been shut up for six weeks as the former landlord had run away and the village appeared to do well without it. The present tenant was a cycle agent and taxidermist as well, 'So you stuff people first and put them on wheels afterwards?' also Cambridge: Jolly Butchers, Star, Sun; Bassingbourn: Crown; Bottisham: Plough; Comberton: Plough; Fordham: Six Bells, Landbeach:

Red Cow; Lt Shelford: Carrier's Cart; Stapleford: Dolphin; Steeple Morden: beer house; Waterbeach: Haunch of Mutton, Plough and Horses; Willingham: William IV, Rose and Crown
06 06 30d,e, f

1906 11 16

The Compensation Authority considered claims for premises closed under the Licensing Act. They included a beerhouse at North Brook End, Steeple Morden, The Plough at Comberton, the Red Cow, Landbeach and Carrier's Cart at Lt Shelford. Potton Brewery said they would lose £275 if the licence of a beerhouse at Heath Road, Litlington was taken away but accepted £240 as compensation. However Benskin's Watford Brewery refused £251 for the Sun in Newmarket Road, Cambridge. also Stapleford Dolphin, Waterbeach Haunch of Mutton & Plough & Horses, Sawston – Flower Pot, Willingham – King William IV, Bottisham Plough, Soham Queen's Arms and Old Brewery 06 11 16a & b

1908 07 17

An old stile leading from Steeple Morden church had rotted away and been replaced by a different one, a court was told. William Wilson had cut through the upper rail, saying it was an obstruction to the footpath: it became slippery with mud, children who went to school spoiled their clothes getting through and women had to go round another way. Farmer Charles Frohock said he now had to move 20 valuable horses out of the meadow and claimed damages. But the magistrates dismissed the case. CWN 08 07 17 P7

1908 07 31

Twenty-six licensed houses are to close, magistrates decided. They include the Robin Hood at Litlington, Chesterton Long Reach, Swaffham Prior's Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Three Jolly Watermen in Waterbeach Fen. But the Fox in the Wood at Soham and the Cock at Isleham were spared after Police Superintendent Winter failed to appear to give evidence. The licence of the Black Horse at Over was renewed after the Star Brewery appealed. also Barrington Boot & Shoe, Bassingbourn Yew Tree, Steeple Morden Lion, Swaffham Prior John Bull, Bottisham Rose & Crown, Cottenham Six Bells, Oakington Lion and Lamb, Stapleford Hammer & Anvil, Swavesey Chequers, Willingham Little Rose, Castle Camps George, Balsham Ram, Linton White Hart, Cambridge Yorkshire Grey, Old Red Lion, Nine Pines, Thatched House, Baker's Arms, Red Lion, Brewery Tap & Carpenters' Arms. CWN 08 07 31

1908 10 09

Provision of smallholdings Hauxton, Cottenham, Steeple Morden & Haslingfield – CWN 08 10 09

1911 12 01

The Vicar of Steeple Morden has discharged a good workman living with his wife in a neat cottage in the village simply and solely because he refused to attend church instead of chapel. Eight other employees have agreed to become compulsory church-goers and remain on. Rev Orlebar says: "I don't want anybody to change his religion for me but prefer to employ people who can worship together with me on Sunday. Church-going has become terribly slack in this village, yet these narrow-minded dissenters made an awful fuss because I said a man could play tennis on Sunday and still be a devout Christian" 11 12 01a

1912 02 16

The former tenant of the Hoops at Kneesworth complained that when magistrates took away his licence they had taken away his living. They had said there were too many public houses in the village. But since then the building had been demolished and a handsome village clubroom built on the site where members could obtain intoxicating drinks. The Bench said they could not remedy the matter and if he wanted to get beer he should become a member of the club. He had since become licensee of the Rose at Bassingbourn. 12 02 16 Tenant of Green Man at Thriplow, a heavy drinker, jumped from bedroom window. Beehive beerhouse Litlington, Oak beerhouse Melbourn and Hill House beerhouse Steeple Morden closed.

1912 02 23

Pioneer credit society discussed at Steeple Morden – 12 02 23d

1912 07 26

Kirtling had three public houses, the Beehive, Queen's Head and the Red Lion with a licensed house in the hamlet of Upend nearly a mile away. Dr Wikins had his surgery at the Beehive and some of his patients had their meals there, Methodist preachers left their horses there – although most now cycle. It was the most convenient for the men visiting Perrin's smithy and the allotments. All the principal people of the village – apart from the parson – had signed a memorial to keep it, licensing magistrates were told. Also : Licensing: Steeple Morden Hill House, Cherry Hinton Russian Arms, Swavesey Red Lion, Cambridge: Duke of Gloucester Prospect Row, Rose & Crown & Windmill in Russell St, Danish Flag in Fitzroy St, Lamb in Guildhall St (details), Compasses in East Road 12 07 26 o&p

1912 11 15

Licensing compensation for Steeple Morden Hill House, Cherry Hinton Russian Arms, Swavesey Red Lion, Cambridge Duke of Gloucester, Windmill, Danish Flag & Compasses – 12 11 15

1914 10 23

Recruiting – Steeple Morden

1914 12 11

A Steeple Morden labourer was summonsed for using threatening language in the village Reading Room. William Chance, the caretaker, said the man had been playing billiards with another member and because he was losing began to use bad language. When he complained the man used very bad language and threatened to give him a good hiding. Defendant said he'd ordered cocoa and had to wait 40 minutes for it. The rules said no one should swear but nearly all the members did. He was fined ten shillings

1930 02 04

Sir – the misfortune which has fallen upon the seven tenants of Cheney Water Farm, Steeple Morden prompts a public appeal on their behalf. The destruction of a large brick barn and adjoining cart shed by the recent gale buried nearly all the carts and implements used on the farm; a number of other implements are badly broken, some beyond repair. About ten tons of chaff has also been damaged. It is urgent to carry out repairs in order that the work on the farm can proceed but the tenants are not in a position to bear the cost themselves. We shall be grateful for donations of any amount – G.T. Garratt, County Councillor, E. O. Fordham Chairman of County Smallholdings Committee. 30 02 04

1933 07 26

Steeple Morden estate, p3*

1937 12 22

Steeple Morden stack fire, third of series of mysterious fires - 37 12 22c

1938 01 27

Councillors considered building houses at Boggs Gap, Steeple Morden. The site was damp and would be bad to build on as the foundations would be on gault. It was at the bottom of a slope and water was oozing out all the time. It had a north-east aspect and was at the wrong end of the village. There was no water, electric light or fence and it would prove very expensive. But the Housing Officer said it was the best of three available sites and the purchase had now gone so far that it was impractical to stop it. 38 01 27c

1938 08 13

The harvest is in full swing; the dry summer means gain to the heavy land and fenland farmers but a loss to the light lands with corn yield and quality far superior to last year. Against this must be set off

the partial failure of the hay, sugar beet, roots and other green crops required to feed the cattle and stock during the coming autumn and winter. At Burwell there is a total failure of fruit owing to severe frosts, Ickleton report a poor year for roots – the soil is much too dry, Oakington wheat looks well but sprouts and cabbage are very poor at Steeple Morden. - 38 08 13

1938 12 17

Steeple Morden parish council protested against the proposed acquisition of 500 acres of good agricultural land by the Air Ministry for use as an emergency landing ground. The site was extremely valuable & would mean 20 people would be put out of work. Nearby was a farm which only employed one man, it was practically derelict. Two miles away was land of thin chalk soil that the owner would be pleased to get rid of; it would make a highly suitable landing ground. 38 12 17

1939 08 19

Blinded by the dazzling beam of a searchlight and unable to see his instrument panel, an RAF pilot leaped by parachute from his plane as it dived to the ground and burst into flames at Steeple Morden. Flying Officer Jeff, of Debden, was flying a Hawker Hurricane in formation with two other planes when he was caught by the searchlight. He dare not move out of the beam for fear of colliding with the other planes and, unable to see his panel, got into a spin. He jumped out and landed in a churchyard. The machine fell near a cottage, setting fire to some trees and killing several chickens. There were several small explosions as flames reached the ammunition. All that remained was a charred and tangled mass of metal strewn about an orchard 39 08 19a

1940 02 06

Pilot escaped by parachute when his plane crashed at Steeple Morden last August; had been blinded by beam of searchlight; pilot R. Voase Jeff awarded Croix de Guerre; was the first to bring down German plane in the B.E.F. area – 40 02 06a Steeple Morden stack blaze – 40 05 07a

1946 06 07

Steeple Morden windmill fire damaged engine room and hopper – 46 06 07

1952 08 01

Cambridgeshire County Council wants a police house built on South Cambs R.D.C.'s housing site at Steeple Morden. First they wanted the house on the east side but now they have chosen another site which is "worse than ever" and completely spoils the layout; it is the only reasonable place to have a road. The current plans include no provision for the house but, said Coun Murfitt, "for some unreasonably obstinate reason they are not prepared to look at anything at all except our site".

1963 07 05

The badger is a rare animal confined to the south-west of the county. The Naturalists Trust believes they should be protected. In 1959 they had setts at Morden Grange Plantation and Odsey but one on a nature reserve at Steeple Morden has been destroyed. There is a wide-spread belief badgers kill poultry, nesting pheasants and even lambs. But they eat worms, insects or wasps nest or dig for bluebell bulbs. 63 07 05c

1964 04 29

Steeple Morden, Guilden Morden photo feature – 64 04 29c

1964 06 12

Steeple Morden 'at crucial stage' planning inquiry into eight houses told – 64 06 12a

1967 04 18

Canberra bomber crashes into empty house, Steeple Morden – 67 04 18

1972 03 04

Steeple Morden school capacity to double, p7

1973 05 25

Steeple Morden hall, p4

1975 02 06

The Cambridge area property market offers a broad range of housing at the moment. It ranges from Ridley Hall to a tiny disused telephone exchange at Bottisham. Other exchanges at Cheveley and Steeple Morden are also on the market as STD spreads through the Cambridge telephone area. Some of them have possibilities as bijou cottage residences but buyers have to go on the waiting list for a telephone

1975 04 18

The Government has given permission to the giant Shell petrol company to look for oil in south Cambridgeshire. The area selected extends from Gt Shelford up to Royston and southwards through Hertfordshire as far as Buntingford. In the west it takes in Ashwell, Steeple Morden and Gamlingay, while in the east it extends almost to Saffron Walden. The actual drilling areas have not yet been selected. Nearly six years ago an American oil company planned to make test borings in the north Cambridgeshire fens. A few years before that tests were made near Saffron Walden. Nothing came of either project

1984 05 02

A sad hulk of a building stands empty and overgrown on the edge of Litlington. A few faded pictures on the wall provide the reminder that this used to be the village school. With the windows and doors broken the wind whistles through. Since it closed in 1981 the children have been bussed to Steeple Morden. The closure has left an open wound in the village and the whole story is a sorry saga of bureaucratic bungling. It began in 1950 when the school moved from its old home in the centre of the village to 'temporary' accommodation in former war-time Air Force huts while the old building was repaired. For reasons nobody really knows they never moved back. 84 05 02 p16

1988 05 16

Steeple Morden American air base final reunion – 88 05 16